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open to all for discussing problems connected w

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نحمدہ ونصلی علی رسولہ الکریم

I'JAZ-I-ILMI OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH—I

Translated from Urdu

When a man claims a certain position for himself, the surest and simplest test of the truth of his claim lies in the question whether or not he is discharging, in a satisfactory manner, the duties and the obligations of the position he claims. For instance, a man who claims to be a physician has to be accepted as such if we see him attending to patients every day and curing their ailments. Or, if we see a man busying himself on the soil day after day and raising crops we have no reason to deny his being a farmer. This is a practical test, and like all other practical tests it is easier to apply and much more sure than an academic inquiry into the truth of any claim.

And what is true in this respect of professional claims, or claims to secular dignity, is also true in regard to the claims of a spiritual teacher who claimed to be a Prophet of God. The duty to teach men spiritual truths, to purify their hearts and souls, to revivify the finer capabilities of their nature, and to reawaken Faith in their hearts is the essential part of the mission of a Prophet of God; and in the fulfilment of this mission lies a basic test for the truth of his claim. This is a decisive method of approach to the question and the Holy Quran has made use of this

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argument with extraordinary force and vigour. We read :—

و ان كنتم فى ريب مما نزلنا على عبدنا ○ فاتوا بسورة من مثله ○ وادعوا شهداءكم من دون الله ان كنتم صادقين ○ فان لم تفعلوا ○ و لن تفعلوا ○ فاتقوا النار التى و قودها الناس والحجارة ○

> And if you are in doubt as to that which we have revealed to our servant, then produce a chapter to match it and (for this purpose you may) call on all your helpers, besides Allah, if you are truthful.
>
> But if you do it not—and you never shall do it—then remember the fire of which men and stones are the fuel. (ii. 23, 24).

For those who might be in doubt as to the claim of the Holy Prophet this is a constant and a standing challenge to the end of time. If they think that there is no difference between them and Mohammad, if they think that Mohammad is not the Prophet of God, then it should be possible for them to do what Mohammad had done ; it should be possible for them to produce a book to match the Holy Quran in beauty of style, in depth of meaning and sublimity of conception—in short, match it as the Perfect Book for the guidance of man. But if they fail to do so, they should pause and take heed lest they stumble through life into the fire which awaits those who disregard the light that was meant to show them the way. And in the task of producing a book, or only a small piece, to match the Holy Quran, the unblievers are given full liberty to call in the help of whomsoever they may, except Allah.

Surely no challenge could be more confident or more clear ; and no challenge could be less easy to meet if the Holy Prophet Mohammad was only an ordinary human being and not a Prophet of God at all. The fact that no one had ever dared to take up this challenge proved convincingly that the Book owed its origin to a super-human agency.

As hinted above, the most essential part of the mission of a Prophet of God is (*i*) a definite message ;

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(*ii*) the ability to impart that message ; (*iii*) to expound its philosophy ; (*iv*) to show the deep wisdom underlying it ; (*v*) and, most of all, to create purity and power in the soul. The Holy Quran says:

يتلو عليهم آياته و يزكيهم و يعلمهم الكتاب والحكمة ○

i.e., a Prophet of God reads the signs of God upon his people; he purifies them and teaches them the Book ; he explains to them the wisdom on which that teaching is based. In other words, every true Prophet of God addresses himself to three essential tasks. (*a*) He starts with reciting the signs of God ; *i.e.*, he bears witness to the existence of God by means of miracles and wonderous works. (*b*) The deep abiding Faith born of these miracles burns away the dross from the hearts of those who gather round him and a fresh impulse is given to their spiritual powers, which also reacts upon their intellectual capacity in secular spheres. (*c*) Beside, he imparts his teaching, not as an unreasonable arbitrary imposition, but explains to the world the wisdom on which his message is based. (*d*) And lastly, he brings into being the nucleus of a society of which the individual and aggregate life is guided and controlled by that teaching. In other words, he demonstrates the strength of his teaching by showing how it worked in actual practice. These are the fundamental aspects of the mission of a Prophet of God and the real test of Prophethood lies in the proper discharge of these duties.

One of the greatest miracles of Prophethood is that through its agency unrest, uncertainty and discord are replaced by concord and peace. The grip is loosened over life of stagnation and decay and death ; darkness folds up its tents and steals away, and the glorious light of day begins to pour forth from the sun. Instead of vague and barren speculation, man, henceforth, has the advantage of the sure light of the Word of God to guide him in life. These things can be achieved by no other agency ; no other institution can duplicate this performance ; and this inability on the part of every one else is the soul and the essence of the miracle.

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The truth of the teaching of a prophet, in fact, always lies in that teaching itself. The very body of the teaching—the nature of its content, its purity, and its life-giving power serve as the strongest arguments in its favour. After the morning sun has risen in all its splendour one does not need being told that it is day; any further evidence on the point is superfluous after that self-evident fact. The sentiment expressed in the following beautiful line, therefore, though it partakes more perhaps of the nature of an emotional climax in the heart of the disciple, is perfectly sound in its logic as well:

محمد هست برهان محمد

Muhammad, in himself, constitutes a conclusive argument in favour of his claim.

Non-Muslims might deny the force of this logic but it is not open to the Muslims to do so. For, the Holy Quran has used the argument with the utmost emphasis that the matchless quality and the superhuman excellence of its teaching are a proof of the divine origin of this marvellous Book. The Muslims cannot deny the open, universal challenge which the Quran throws out that not only individual efforts would fail to produce a book, or even a small portion thereof, of equal merit, but the combined endeavours of the authors and scholars of the whole world shall equally fall short of the achievement. According to the Quranic view, this argument is quite conclusive: failure on the part of the opponents to take up this challenge is tantamount to a virtual admission of the Divine origin of the Book, and their continued disbelief, in spite of this virtual admission, is culpable, says the Holy Quran, and they should prepare to receive the punishment their unreasonable opposition must eventually bring on them.

Thus there can be no question that according to the Holy Quran this test is an authentic test; and when we study the claims of the Promised Messiah in this light we find them based on equally sure ground. For Ahmad's challenge, too, stands till the end of tim

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and the fact remains that no one has come forward to try issues with him. Only the Miracle of Mohammad lay in the *tanzeel* of the Holy Quran—in the fact that the infinite wisdom of God chose Mohammad to receive this wonderful Book on behalf of man: and the miracle of Ahmad lies in *tafseer*—in a proper exposition of Islam when to the rest of the Muslim world the Quran had become like a sealed book. At this critical juncture God gave it to Ahmad to interpret this Holy Book in its true light and proper perspective. But just as in the case of Mohammad the *tanzeel* of the Book was from God, in the case of Ahmad, who was but a servant of Mohammad, its *tafseer* too proceeded from the same divine source. In the *wahyee* (Revelation) that came down on Ahmad the fact is repeatedly made clear that the extraordinary depth of insight into the Quran that was characteristic of the Promised Messiah was a gift from God, calculated to strengthen his hands in the proper discharge of the duties of his mission. For the Holy Quran describes itself as كتاب مكنون *i.e.*, its spiritual content and inner purpose is not intelligible except in the case of those whom the grace of God should make pure.

This claim of the Promised Messiah in regard to *tafseer* and the exposition of Islam forms an important feature of his works, but here we must content ourselves with only a few quotations. Passages such as the following are to be met with even in the earliest *wahyee* of Ahmad:

الرحمن علم القرآن ○ لتنذر قوما ما انذر اباء هم ولتستبين سبيل المجرمين ○ قل جاء الحق و ز حق الباطل ان الباطلا كان ذهوقا ○ كل بركت من محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم فتبارك من علم و تعلم ○ هوالذى ارسل رسوله بالهدىٰ و دين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله ○

i.e., O Ahmad! The Almighty God has Himself taught thee the Holy Quran so that you should warn those whose forebears were not warned, and so that the error of the way followed by those whoare guilty should become manifest. Say, the Truth has come and False-

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hood has vanished, and it was in the fitness of things that Falsehood should vanish. Every blessing comes from Mohammad, so blessed is He who taught and he who was taught. The Almighty God is he who sent His Apostle with His guidance and the true religion so that he should make it prevail against all other religions.

سيهزم الجمع و يولون الادبر

The people of all climes and countries shall seek to oppose thee, and but the hosts shall be broken and dispersed. They shall turn their backs and flee from the field.

ان رسالتی هذا اية من آيات الله رب العالمين و تبصرة لقوم طالبين ○ و انها من ربی حجة قاطعة و برهان مبين ○ و من كان يظن انه فصيح و عنده كلام كانه بدر تام ○ فليات بمثله ○ والصمت عليه حرام ○ و ان اجتمع آباءهم و ابناءهم و اكفاءهم و علماءهم و حكماءهم و فقهاءهم على ان ياتوا بمثل هذا التفسير ○ لا ياتون بمثله و لو كان بعضهم لبعض ظهيرا ○ فانی دعوت لذالك و ان دعائی مستجاب ○ فلن تقدر على جوابه كتاب ○ لا شيوخ ولاشاب

This[1] treatise of mine is a sign out of the signs of Allah, like a torch for the seekers after truth. From the Lord, my God, it is a decisive argument in my favour. Let him who fancies himself to be a writer, with power to produce brilliant works of outstanding merit, try to bring out something from his pen to match my composition. For those who may have pretentions in this line it would be a sin to remain silent. But I declare that even if their elders and their progeny, their friends and their doctors of learning, and their great wise men all combine to help each other in this task, their united efforts shall miserably fall short of the achievement. I have prayed to my Lord in this regard and my prayer has been granted, so that none shall succeed against me in this matter. Neither shall the freshness and energy of the young be of any avail

1. *I'jaz-al-Masih*, p. 54.

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when pitted against me, nor the maturity and experience of the old.[1]

Again :

فانه کتاب لیس له جواب ○ و من قام للجواب تنمر ○
فسوف یریٰ انه تندم و تذمر ○

This is a book to which there is no answer. Whosoever would undertake a refutation thereof, shall soon witness his failure in the task and come to grief.[2]

In another place Ahmad says :

لقد اعطیت اسرار السرائر فسئل ان شئت من نوع اسوال
و کم سرارانی نور ربی و ایات علی صدق المقال
و علم تبهرن عقول ناس ورائی قد علی قنن الجبال

"The deepest of deep mysteries have been unfolded to me, so that you may ask me any question you like in regard to the wisdom of the Quranic teachings. The light of my Lord has revealed to me wonderful secrets, and He has granted me wonderful signs which bear witness to the truth of my claim."

In *Zaroorat-al-Imam* (p. 33) the Promised Messiah says :

میں قران مجید کے معجزہ کے ظل پر فصاحت و بلاغت
کا نشان دیا گیا ہوں۔ کوئی نہیں جو میرا مقابلہ کر سکے۔

By way of a redemonstration of the matchless quality of the Holy Quran, I have been gifted by divine grace with a style in expression which in beauty, and force, and effect, cannot be equalled by any one.

In another place he says :

انی کتب الکتب مثل خوارق انظر اعندك ما یصوب کمائی
ان کنت تقدریا خصیم کقدرتی فا کتب کمثلی قاعدا بنخدائی

1. It should be noted that this claim of matchless works is not intended by the Promised Messiah to stand against the Quran. In *Lujjat-al-Noor* (footnote on page 122) he says کلما قلت من کمال بلاغتی فی البیان فهوابعد کتاب الله القران ○ "Whatever I have said in regard to the matchless quality of my works is of course subject to the supremacy of the Holy Quran in this field."

2. See title p. of *I'jaz-al-Masih*.

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> Indeed, the works that I have produced are, in quality, a miracle from God. If you have anything to match the life-giving water that flows from my pen, come and produce it.
>
> If you have powers like mine at your command, then come and sit by my side to produce works like mine."

Ahmad repeatedly emphasised that God had given to him three miracles: (*a*) knowledge of specific events still hidden in the future—a knowledge that was unrivalled in its nature and extent; (*b*) an unrivalled insight into the meaning of the Quran and the wisdom that underlies the Quranic teaching: (*c*) and an extraordinary and miraculous command over the Arabic language. In all these fields he repeatedly challenged his opponents to try issues with him, but whosoever ventured into the lists, only experienced the ignominy of defeat. Many of his enemies paid the supreme penalty at the bar of Heaven; for, in accordance with the prophecies announced by Ahmad they met their doom and passed away from this world, and now even their names, though great in their day, have sunk into oblivion.

Ahmad was distinguished with the title from God of *Sultan-al-Qalam*, *i.e.*, Monarch of the Pen; and his mission was further strengthened by the divine promise that whosoever would aspire to write in oposition to him, his pen shall be split and broken to pieces. On the other hand, the words which flowed from the lips of Ahmad and the pearls of wisdom which his powerful pen scattered far and wide, brought new life to this earth in a manner which puts to shame the life and beauty that follows in the wake of rain in spring time. Islam, of which the real soul and the inner spirit had soared away from the hearts of its followers, through Ahmad descended once more upon this earth. Deprived of this spiritual content humanity had become like a lifeless frame—an inert and dead mass that slowly rots and decays and finally decomposes. But renewed insight into the Quranic

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wisdom, which God vouchsafed to man through Ahmad, put new life into the carcase and stirred the basic qualities of original human nature with a fresh impulse. And, as in the case of his great master, the Holy Prophet Mohammad, Ahmad too threw out a universal challenge and said in the words of the Holy Quran :

> Should the People of the Book and all others—learned rabbis of the Jews and the great scholars of Christendom, Hindu Pandits, great statesmen of the world and great economists, scientists and historians—should all combine to produce a book equal to the Quran in merit, ignominous failure shall be their portion.

It is to be remembered that Ahmad proclaimed at the very outset of his mission that understanding of Islam and exposition of the Quran vouchsafed to him by God was absolutely unrivalled in this age. He declared that no one from among the Muslims, or the followers of any other religion, could stand a comparison with him in this respect. In the course of numerous works such as *Baraheen-i-Ahmadiyya*, *Aeena-Kamalat-i-Islam*, *I'jaz-i-Ahmadi*, *I'jaz-al-Masih*, etc., from which some portions we have already quoted above. Ahmad repeatedly called upon those who were inclined to doubt his claim to come forward and falsify it if they could by producing a better commentary of the Quran and a better exposition of the Islamic principles. His opponents however only continued to cry him down, to insult him and to heap all manner of abuse upon him—they continued to sing in chorus that they could take up this challenge if they wished—but in actual fact, of course, they never ventured to take it up. As it was in the days of Mohammad, so it was in the case of his servant Ahmad in the modern era ; the philosophies and religions in vogue in the non-Muslim world failed once again to outshine the light of Islam ; and through this failure virtually confessed that they had nothing to show on their side that could stand a comparison with the Quran.

But, even though this state of affairs yielded a clear verdict on the issue, the divine scheme, on this

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occasion of the second advent of the Holy Prophet, so to say, was not satisfied with it. In this age when skilful (often unscrupulous) propaganda can confuse even simple values, it planned to obtain a concrete verdict expressed in clear words and circumstances so decisive that no dialectic juggling with words or facts should ever manage to becloud it. In December, 1896, an important religious conference was held in Lahore in which prominent religious leaders from among the followers of every religion that counts in the world participated to expound the respective points of view of the systems they followed. Among others, the conveners of this conference invited the Promised Messiah to read a paper and the invitation was gladly accepted. The conference was to be held on December 26, 27 and 28; and on December 21 the Promised Messiah caused a printed *ishtihar* (leaflet) to be distributed broadcast, from which we reproduce the following significant passages:—

> "In the big religious conference to be held in Lahore on December 26, 27 and 28, (1896) a paper of mine shall be read which deals with the merits of the Holy Quran and the question of Quranic miracles. The knowledge and wonderful truths embodied in this paper proceed from a super-human source and form, as such, a remarkable miracle of God, its composition at my hand having taken place with special divine succour..... The Omniscient God has conveyed to me in a Revelation that this paper shall prevail against and totally eclipse all other points of view; and that it contains such truth, and wisdom, and light, that the followers of other religions, no matter whether Christians, or Arya Samajists or Sanatan Dharmis, or any others, provided they attend the conference and carefully listen to its reading, shall feel small in their minds on account of the inadequacy of their own religious books in comparison. For God wills that on that day the beauties of His matchless and pure Book should shine forth and dazzle the eyes of non-believers.
>
> "I witnessed in a *kashf* (vision) that out of the void of heaven a Hand descended on my palace, and ere that Hand touched the edifice a powerful resplendence burst

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forth from it which spread all round, and a powerful shaft of light fell on my hand as well. Then someone who stood by me cried out in a loud and animated voice : الله اکبر۔ ضربت خیبر

" This *Kashf* refers to my heart, it being the place on which the light of divine knowledge is descending. The light shown in the *kashf* signifies insight into the profound meaning of the Holy Quran, while Khaibar stands for all the false religions which have been corrupted by *shirk* (setting up equals with God) because they seek to put mortal man on the throne that belongs only to God, or inculcate unworthy conceptions in regard to the attributes of the Divine Being. Thus it was conveyed to me that following the proper circulation of this paper the inadequacy of other religions and the error of other philosophies shall become manifest, and the light of the Holy Quran shall continue to spread in the world until it took the whole globe in its stride."

The prophecy contained in this *ishtihar* is very clear, and equally clear was its fulfilment: word for word, events fell out as foretold. The paper written by the Promised Messiah was hailed by the concourse assembled in the Conference as embodying the most worthy and satisfactory treatment of the questions set by the Conference to be answered in accordance with the teachings of the religions represented therein. Out of the testimony of thousands we only reproduce a portion of the remarks of the President of the Conference:*

" After the address delivered by Pandit Gordhan Das Sahib there was an interval of half an hour ; but, because at the end of that interval a famous spokesman of Islam was to take the stage, the greater portion of the audience did not stir at all and remained sitting as before. While it was still a good deal earlier than 1-30, the spacious accommodation in the Islamia College began to fill up and in a few minutes became packed from end to end. The audience must have numbered from seven to eight thousand, comprising the followers of every religion and the intellectual people of various societies. Seats had

* It is noteworthy that the conveners of this Conference and its Management were not disciples of the Promised Messiah, and there is therefore absolutely no reason to suspect any undue bias in his favour.

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been prepared on the basis of a most liberal estimate of the attendance expected, but soon it became evident that accommodation was not adequate to meet the occasion. Hundreds of people were thankful to get standing room only, and listened from start to finish with rapt attention. Among those who cheerfully bore this positive discomfort rather than miss such a rare intellectual treat, there were people belonging to the best society in the Punjab—landed magnates, prominent public men, the cream of intellectual circles, and the leading lights of the learned professions. In short the audience represented every type and layer of society in the province, and all listened spell-bound, even those who, in order to hear this wonderful discourse to the end, had to remain standing on their legs continually for four to five hours. Originally the time provided by the Managing Committee for this paper was only two hours, but such was the grip it obtained over the audience that the moderators gladly permitted and announced that proceedings shall continue until the reading of the paper was concluded. This decision represented the unanimous spirit of the audience and was therefore hailed by all with shouts of joy. When Maulvi Abu Yusuf Mubarak Ali surrendered his own time to enable the reading to be concluded, there was another shout of joy in which all participated, the moderators as well as members of the audience. From beginning to end this paper was listened to with uniform interest and attention." *

It would not be out of place here to refer briefly to the effect produced on the audience by other speakers in the Conference, especially Maulvi Mohammad Husain of Batala and Maulvi Sanaullah of Amritsar, both of whom had pretentions to greatness and claimed to be the rightful spokesmen of Islam to the exclusion of the Promised Messiah. Mohammad Husain was among the first to rise up in opposition to Ahmad when he declared that Jesus Christ was dead and that he himself was the Mahdi and Messiah expected by the Muslims the world over. With an all-India reputation for learning, Mohammad Husain

* Report *Jalsa-i-Azam*, page 79.

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claimed to be the religious leader in India of the sect known as *Ahl-i-Hadith* and that was the position of distinction which in fact he enjoyed in public estimation. Maulvi Sanaullah did not rank so high, but he deserves special mention because he is still alive. All through his life his best (even unscrupulous) endeavours have been directed against Ahmadiyyat, but he has had no success, for, indeed, no one can check the course of a mountain torrent as it roars down the hillside.

The address delivered by Maulvi Mohammad Husain was so poor that the audience literally got fed up with it (though it was not long by any means) and did not hesitate to show its impatience. In his mortification he therefore contrived to get another chance on the stage in place of another speaker who did not avail himself of the time allotted to him. This change in the programme was well advertised in the public, but so great was the disgust aroused by his first address that when the time came for him to speak again, attendance remained disappointingly poor and the Management thought it best to wait for more than half an hour before asking him to begin. But this second attempt also proved no more lucky than the first. In fact its keynote was an apology for the defects of his first speech and an attempt to meet the criticism that it had been in the main beside the point.*

Maulvi Sanaullah's contribution to the discussion, too, was extremely mediocre. There was neither originality in it, nor any depth; and it fell flat on the audience.

In fact, on going through the volume that embodies the addresses delivered in the Conference, one cannot help being overwhelmed by the wide gap in the standard of excellence attained by the paper of the Promised Messiah and the poor quality of the rest of the addresses. As this sharp and extraordinary difference comes home to one the natural impulse is to cry

* See Report *Jalsa-i-A'zam*, second address of Maulvi Mohammad Husain and remarks by the Chairman which preceded it.

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out اللہ اکبر خربت خیبر "God is indeed great, and His Light has totally eclipsed the false and corrupt religions." For, one realises then with full force that the challenge of the Holy Quran remains unanswered even to-day after all the wonderful progress of 13 centuries.

Ahmad's challenge, which in point of fact is only a reiteration of the challenge of the Holy Quran, has, in this day of disbelief and materialism, come in the nick of time. In the days of the Holy Prophet it was addressed to the Arabs whose delight and pride in the capacity of their language, and their own capacity to use that language, knew no bounds. But the Arabs had to admit defeat. Even a poet of the reputation and standing of the great Labeed was so deeply impressed by the Holy Quran that he embraced Islam and for the future gave up writing poetry altogether. As an acknowledgment of the superioirty of the Quran he took down his *Mo'alqah* from the wall of the Ka'ba where it had hung as a masterpiece. Subsequently, whenever any one urged him to write poetry, he invariably replied that in the presence of the Holy Quran there was no need for his poetry.

However, Labeed's reaction to the Quran could be sighted before the Arabs as an argument to show that this Holy Book was peerless, but now when Islam had over-flowed the bounds of the Arab world, circumstances demanded that another similar avowal on a wider basis should be extracted from the followers of the main world reilgions. The world had changed almost beyond recognition since the days of the Holy Prophet. New branches of learning had sprung up, new sciences had been discovered, and new philosophies founded. The cultures that reigned supreme in the world in the new era did not attach much importance to Arabic, but they were inordinately proud of their own philosophies—the Buddhists and the Hindus of their ancient philosophy and Europe of its modern views and of the grand edifice it had built up on those

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views. Therefore a fresh demonstration of the supremacy of the Quranic view of life and the Quranic philosophy was needed; and the field chosen by divine wisdom to witness this miracle was India—where all the great philosophies, new and old, jostled each other and fought for supremacy.

On this occasion God chose a non-Arab champion for a philosophy of which the repository was in the Arabic language; He raised this champion in an obscure village in the Punjab—a village that lay altogether off the tracks of the march of modern progress; and Providence so arranged the course of events that Occidental and Oriental philosophies and the contending world religions—Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, the Promised Messiah and those Muslim theologians who claimed to be the rightful spokesmen of Islam and denied the mission of the Promised Messiah—all met in a clean contest in which the Messiah easily defeated them all and wrung from non-Muslims a clear confession that the Holy Quran was superior to all other religious books, and from Muslims that Ahmad's exposition of Islam was the best and most worthy.

This is a fact of history which can neither be denied nor talked away. The non-Muslims might possibly seek shelter under the excuse that they did not accept this test to be valid; but the Muslims, who have been using this argumant for nearly fourteen hundred years, cannot do so. If the matchless quality of the Quran can serve as a conclusive argument to establish the truth of the claims of Mohammad, if it is enough to make rejection punishable with the chastisement of hell, there is no reason why the same argument should not have the same force in the case of Ahmad.

اللهم صل على محمد و آل محمد و على عبدك المسيح الموعود ○
و بارك وسلم ○

ان كنتم فى ريب مما نزلنا على عبدنا فاتوا بسورة من
مثله ○ وادعوا شهداءكم من دون الله ان كنتم صادقين ○

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و ان لم تفعلوا و لـــن تفعلوا ○ فاتقوانا رالتی و قودها الناس والحجارہ ○ اعدت للکافرین ○

Another remarkable thing about the manifest success of Ahmad's paper was that its triumph did not remain confined to the audience present in the Conference. The Press too rendered it a full meed of unstinted praise. *The Civil & Military Gazette* of Lahore which is the leading daily in the Puhjab and one of the most important papers in India, spoke very highly of it, while it practically ignored the rest of the addresses. It wrote :—

> Particular interest centred in the lecture of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, a master in the apologetics of Islam. An immense gathering of all sects from far and near assembled to hear the lecture, which, as the Mirza himself was unable to attend in person, was read by one of his able scholars, Maulvi Abdul Karim Fasih, (the eloquent) of Sialkot. The lecture on the 27th, lasted for about three-and-a-half hours and was listened to with rapt attention, though so far it dealt only with the first question. The speaker promised to treat the remaining questions if time was allowed, so the president and the executive committee consented to extend their sittings to the 29th."

Even more appreciative notes appeared in *The Indian Observer*, *The Paisa Akhbar*, *The Chaudhween Sadi*, *The Sadiq-al-Akhbar*, and in *The Mukhbir Deccan.*

Further it should be remembered that an unfailing quality of Life is growth and development and continued existence. Thus when the world has forgotten all about the rest of the addresses, the paper contributed by the Promised Messiah is still being eagerly read in an ever-widening range of circulation. It continues to inspire thousands with deep spiritual solace and Faith and Hope. It has been translated into English, Arabic, French, Gujrati, Hindi, Bengali, Malay, Sumatri, Chinese, Sindhi, German, Burmese, Kantari, Gurmukhi, Marhatti, Malyalam, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Balandi (official language in Sumatra) and into Sunda which is the common dialect there.

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The circulation of his paper in foreign countries again brought out a warm tribute of voluntary praise in book form of which the following quotations would give some idea to the reader :

Theosophical Book Notes wrote :

" The best and most attractive presentation of the faith of Mohammad which we have yet come across."

The Indian Spectator.—" An exposition of the teachings of the Koran in a very attractive form ..... there is nothing disputatious and nothing which is not drawn direct from the Koran."

The English Mail.—" A Summary of really Islamic ideas."

The Indian Review.—" A very entertaining and pleasant, readable, lucid, comprehensive and philosophical ..... evokes admiration. The book deserves to be in the hands of every Muhammadan student and also in the libraries of those who wish to know something of Muhammadan religion."

The Spiritual Journal, Boston.—" Pure Gospel."

The Bristol Times and Mirror.—" Clearly it is no ordinary person who thus addresses himself to the West."

The Muslim Review.—The reader will meet with many true, profound, original and inspiring ideas which would interest the Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Strongly commended."

The Daily News, Chicago.—" The devout and earnest character of the author is apparent."

The Anglo-Belgian Times, Brussels.—" The Teachings of Islam " turns out to be a wonderful commentary on the Quran (the Muslim Scripture) itself. The author's method has a further moral, and this is one which, to our mind, all writers on religion will do well to consider. It is that a religious treatise should be affirmative rather than negative in character. It should insist on the beauties of one system rather than on the defects of another. " The Teachings of Islam " demonstrates this principle in a pre-eminent degree, and the result is that the author has been able, without being in the least bitter towards any non-Muslim system, to guide the

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reader to an appreciation of Muslim fundamentals such as would have been impossible otherwise. The book rings with sincerity and conviction."

Thus like the eternal glories of the Holy Quran, this miracle of the Promised Messiah shall stand as long as the world lasts, and those who continue to ignore it shall do so at their peril.

In view of this principle and this criterion Muslim theologians like Maulvi Sanaullah and his friends should fear God and reconsider their attitude towards the Promised Messiah. They should get rid of their false sense of pride and render allegiance to him so that under his banner they may have an opportunity to render real service to the cause of Islam. If they persist in their obstinacy, their end would be as grievous as was the end of those who, in the past, ranged themselves in opposition to Truth.

I close this article on a short quotation from the works of Ahmad which bears closely on the question of his claims, and which is pregnant with meaning:

علم قرآن و علم آن طیب زبان علم غیب از وحی خلاق جهان
این سه علم چون نشانها داده اند هر سه همچو شاهدان ایستاده اند
ادمی زادے ندارد هیچ فن تا در آویزد این میدان من

"Knowledge of the Holy Book, and command over the Arabic language, and a knowledge of the future—these three are gifts to me from God as a sign from Him: they bear witness to the truth of my claims. It is not in the power of man to stand in this field against me."

F. M. SIYAL.

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BABYLONIAN AND ASSYRIAN INFLUENCE UPON VEDIC RELIGION AND CULTURE—I

(Translated from Urdu)

" And how many a town which was iniquitous did We demolish, and We raised up after it another people !

So when they felt Our punishment, Lo ! they began to fly from it.

Do not fly (now) and come back to what you were made to lead easy lives in and to your dwellings, haply you will be questioned.

They said : " O Woe to us ! Surely we were unjust.

And this ceased not to be their cry till we made them cut off, extinct." (The Holy Quran, xxi : 11-15).

Chaldea

Chaldea is the name that in ancient times stood for the tract of land that lies between the Tigris and the Euphrates. Both of these rivers flow out of the snow-clad Armenian mountains, the Tigris towards the east and Euphrates towards the west ; but evenually they converge upon each other and mingle their waters before emptying into the Persian Gulf.

As indicated by an inscription of the Sumerians, another name used for this country was *Kengi*. In the Sumerian language *Ken* means " land ", and *Gi* means " reeds ", and this seems to have been a very good descriptive name for a country large tracts of which were covered by an abundant growth of reeds and rushes.

In this region, which to us is known as Mesopotamia (and more recently as Iraq) rain is scarce, but the soil, being alluvial with a mixture of sand, is exceedingly fertile, so that throughout history the country has maintained a reputation as a store house of agricultural wealth. It is even said that this was the region where wheat and barley were first discovered

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growing with the other wild grasses found in the land. The date palm too is very common and it is said the inhabitants knew how to put this tree to as many as 360 different uses. A kind of strong drink is made from dates even to-day, and sugar and a kind of flour. The dates in themselves, both fresh and dried, are a main article of food.

A glance at the map shows that Mesopotamia and its neighbourhood constitute a region which forms the point of contact between three continents, and there is evidence which seems to indicate that this is the region where human culture first emerged and then gradually threw out its seeds far and wide over Asia, Africa and Europe.

From about 6000 B.C. to about 2750 B.C. a people called *Sumerians* were in possession between the Tigris and the Euphrates, but there is a wide difference of opinion as to the origin of these people. However, we can be definite that they did not belong to the Hamites of Africa, or to the group from which sprang the Indo-Aryans. On the whole it would appear that they belonged to the Semitic race of which the Arabs are a branch. Dr. Abnash Chandra Das and Mr. Hall are inclined to think that the Sumerians were the same people of which the name in India was *Dravid*. Dr. Abnash Chandra Das says that people of this race, in the pre-historic ages, lay spread over the world from India right across to Africa, even as far as the Pyrenese. In his view the Dravids of India, the Bantus of Africa and the Basques of the Pyranese, all belonged to the same group ; and he thinks that the Sumerians too possibly sprang from the same stock.

Why was Sumeria, or Chaldea, the birth place of culture ? This question for the historian is one of great interest, but here we can touch it only in passing. One explanation is furnisned by the geographical position of the land forming, as it does, the point of contact between three extensive terrains inhabited by the human race. Another reason may have been the fecund nature of the soil, it being held

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by many authorities that wheat and barley were first discovered growing wild in this region.

In the ancient records of Chaldea it is said that rulers of that race ruled over the country for 451,000 years, but modern historians do not accept this view. It is certain, however, that some towns in Chaldea like Ur, Larsam and Bahil were very old. Ancient inscriptions discovered and deciphered by modern research bear witness to the glories of this ancient culture. The French scholar Dasarsece in his discovery of the burnt remains of a town that had suffered at the hands of some enemy has brought many interesting things to light.

Historians, seem to agree that about 2300 years B.C. (3700 B.C. according to the traditional date of the Chaldeans) Sargon I collected an army and attacked the Surmerians. After defeating the Sumerians, the invaders settlen in the country. These were the people that in history are known as the Akkadians. They gradually adopted the culture and religion of the people they had routed in the field, and there was thus only a change of rulers while the old culture continued to develop more or less uninterrupted. The Akkadians, in collaboration with the Sumerians, invented a method of writing which is known as the Cuneiform writing, and with this invention a new chapter opened in the history of the human race.

After some time when the power of the Akkadians and the Sumerians was on the decline, they were attacked by two groups of people from the west and by the Elmaites in the east. These western people founded a settlement which slowly grew and became later on the world famous Babylon. Spreading out gradually from this centre they brought all the surrounding country under their rule.

Foundation of Babylon proper was laid by Hemurabi about 2100 B.C. When the power of Babylon declined its glory passed on to the Assyrians

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in the north and the north-east who were a kindred people of the Babylonians, but more free and virile, having been nomads more or less. They came to the forefront about 1300 B.C. and Nineveh, the capital of their empire, became a great city known far and wide. Between the Assyrians and some western people known as Hittaites there was at one time a sanguine conflict knowledge of which has come to us from the inscriptions brought to light at Bogaz-koi.

Sumerian roots of Vedic Religion and Culture

Curiously enough the names of the Assyrian gods as preserved in the inscriptions at Bogaz-koi, are virtually the names of some of the most prominent gods of the Vedas—for instance Indra, Mitra, Varuna and Nasattya.

Basing his view on evidence such as this, a famous German scholar named Brunhopher wrote a book in three volumes in which he tried to prove that a large portion of the Vedas was composed in Sumeria, and that Vedic literature could give subtantial help in the study of Sumeria's past. This view implies in fact that some portions of the Vedas, in any case, are based upon Sumerian history. It is also significant to note that Professor L. A. Waddle has written a book on the finds at Mohenjodaro in Sindh, and as the title of his book he has chosen *Sumerian seals Deciphered*. Professor Waddle has shown on the basis of these finds that Mohenjodaro was ruled over by the Sumerians.

In the Vedas we come across traces of the history of the Sumerians. The geneology of a number of Rajahs in the Puranas is the same as in the case of some Sumerian chiefs. The gods mentioned in the Puranas, their names and their qualities, their consorts and their friends, and certain things (such as charriot, war-club and *sankh*, etc.) which are often used as symbols of these gods, are in many points only a duplication of Sumerian gods and their symbols. This would seem to make the conclusion inevitable that they found their way

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into the Puranas from Sumeria. In other words not only Vedic religion and culture sprang from Sumerian roots, but Puranic culture too is the culture of the people who lived in the land between the Tigris and the Euphrates.

However, a fuller discussion of this subject would follow in the second instalment of this article. For the present we must refrain from going into that question in order to mention a few historical events to which we shall have occasion to refer in the course of the discussion.

The Assyrian Empire

Beginning from 1300 B.C., the Assyrians took about 200 years to consolidate their power. In 1100 B.C. they descended upon Babylon under Tigletehpeelesar and the struggle continued for some time with varying results. But in 745 B.C. Babylon was finally trounced by the Assyrians under Tigletehpeelesar III, who afterwards further extended his sway. Mention of this prince is to be met with in the Old Testament too in which book a number of Babylonian incidents are found strung up into the narrative. Opinion varies as to the original meaning of the word "Bible", but it is not without interest to note that one view is that the word "Bible," suggests some connection with Babylon, and originally would seem to have been the name of a collection which embraced the religious stories of Babylon. The word *Babylon* originally meant the Gate of God.

To resume, however, the empire built up by Tigletehpeelesar III is sometimes spoken off as the second Assyrian Empire of which the most well-known figure to the common man is Senacherib, son of Sargon II. This Sargon II, it should be remembered, has no connection with Sargon I except in the coincidence of name. He tried to bring Egypt under his influence but did not succeed in his ambition. Senacherib had some notable success against Jerusalem but it was very short lived and soon his mighty host was in great peril. The destruction of his army is well

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known to those acquainted with the English language through a famous poem of Lord Byron which reads:

> The Assyrians came down like the wolf upon the fold;
> And his cohorts were gleaming purple and gold;
> And the sheen of their spears was like stars upon the sea,
> When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.
> Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
> That host with their banners at sunset were seen.
> Like the leaves of the forest when the autumn hath blown,
> That host on the morrow lay withered and strewn.

This famous poem of Byron conjures up in dramatic words the tragedy of this great army, and it gives many more awesome details of the destruction wrought on it. After the angel of death had gone through it, the host lay lifeless with wide open staring eyes.

This is the story of a powerful ruler whose rising power made him dream impossible dreams. It is said that the god who brought such utter destruction on Senacherib was Ball-Marduk, the chief god of Babylon, for in 691 B.C. Senacherib had destroyed the temple of this god in Babylon. The statue of Ball-Marduk that had reposed in this temple he had carried away to Assyria. It may here be noted that idol-worship, which forms the chief feature in Hindu religion, flourished in Babylon as far back, any way, as the year 691 B.C. In India we do not come across any clear trace of idol-worship anywhere at so early a date. This circumstance would seem to lead to the conclusion that idolatory found its way into India from the regions round about Babylon, and that Hinduism, thus, is after all only a changed form of the religion of the ancient Babylonians.[1]

This Senacherib was cruelly put to death by one of his sons. Senacherib was succeeded by his son Isar

1. In passing it would not be out of place to refer here to the question whether the Vedas sanction idol-worship or not. Opinion on this point is widely divergent and it is not possible to reduce the discussion to a para or two, and we therefore must leave it, perforce, to be thrashed on some future occasion.

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Hadan who had the temple of Ball-Marduk rebuilt in splendour and had the idol of the dread god reinstalled in it. Naturally this event gave great emphasis to the worship of Ball-Marduk.

While on the subject of Senacherib's tragedy in front of Jerusalem and his death soon after at the hands of his son, it is difficult to resist reference to a similar event that took place about 600 years after Christ. When Khusro, the Emperor of Persia, invaded Jarusalem in the 7th century A.D., he too similarly came to grief ; and most curious of all, we find that about this time the emperor had received a letter from the Holy Prophet of Arabia inviting him to Islam. But he had treated this momentous epistle with contempt and ordered that the writer should be brought before him in chains. When the imperial emissaries reached Arabia to effect the arrest the Holy Prophet deferred his answer till the next morning and then staggered these men with the announcement that their master had meanwhile met with his end. It is significant to note that what the Holy Prophet said on the occasion proved to be only too true : the emperor was during this time murdered by his own son, and in the days that followed Persia's great rival, the Eastern Roman Empire, began to gain the upper hand in war. Soon afterwards however both the Persian and the Roman empires were swallowed up by the rising might of Islam.

Belief in superhuman agencies has always been characteristic of man, and in every age we find that various nations seek the path to glory through the worship of various gods or idols. Isar Hadan has not been the only man to try this course ; only he was more successful than many others in consolidating his power by these means. His son, Asur Banipal, who is known to Greek historians as Sardonapolis, continued in this respect in the foot-steps of his father, and rose to still greater heights of fame. A powerful ruler and a man of original ideas, he was also a great patron of learning. In the estimate of Greek historians he was

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the greatest monarch in the history of Babylon. He evolved a notable system of education and he was the first man to organise a library in the sense in which the word is used to-day. Portions of this library have been brought to light in some of the excavations and what we know of him is largely derived from these fragments.

The result of this imperial favour shown to the worship of Ball-Marduk was that this god came to be looked upon as being more powerful than the ancestral god of the Assyrians. Incidentally it may also be noted that Asur Banipal was able to fufil an old ambition of the rulers of Babylon—an ambition which the famous Senacherib too tried to realise but did not succeed. Asur Banipal obtained some notable results against the Egyptians and his influence at one time became very nearly supreme on the banks of the Nile.

It should not be supposed however that all the inhabitants of Babylon were worshippers of Ball-Marduk at this time. There were followers of many other cults as well and they were by no means pleased by the preference shown to Ball-Marduk. These elements even resorted to rebellion which was put down with a heavy hand. But finally when the Assyrian Empire breathed her last, these elements too had a hand in her undoing.

The Assyrian Empire which came into being after Sargon II continued for 150 years. The foreign hordes which put an end to it are said to be some nomad bands belonging to the Semitic stock who came from the south-west and may reasonably be taken to be connected with Arab blood. But in history they are not known as Semites or Arabs but as "Chaldeans." Curiously enough when the Arab Semites rose to power under the influence of Islam and their political and cultural conquest overflowed the barren wastes of their country, they were greatly helped by the Persians and Medeans who embraced the new religion practically *en masse*. Abyssinia too, of course, proved to be a good friend of Islam in the days of trial prior the Migration to Medina, but

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Islam did not strike root in Abyssinia as it did in Persia. Even before the advent of Islam the Persians and Medeans had extended a helping hand to the Chaldeans and the Assyrian empire could not withstand this combination. In 606 B.C. Nineveh was subdued by these nomad hordes. And what took place in the 7th Century B.C. also came to pass in the 7th Century A.D. when Muslim Arabia once more became the master of the destinies of Mesopotamia. The central fact in these two world events is the same though the details in the two cases are different.

In this way the Chaldean Empire came into existence. As Babylon continued to be the capital of the new regime, the Chaldean Empire is often referred to as the second Babylonian Empire. Among the most prominent figures in the annals of this Empire was Nabonidus who, like Asur Banipal, was a great patron of learning. He was the first man known to history who organised a museum as we understand the word to-day. It is a thing worth remembering with gratitude that not only History but the science of Archæology too owes its origin to the intellectual genius of the Semitic people. It therefore does not seem quite proper to speak of these great races as roving uncivilised bands (Beduins) as Western historians are apt to do.

Nabonidus also founded a department of which the duty was to judge the accuracy of historical events, and History is indebted to the painstaking research of this department for having been enabled to determine the date of Sargon I. It redounds greatly to the honour of Nibonidus, moreover, that the method evolved and followed by him for judging the accuracy of historical events is, in all essentials, the one that is followed even to-day. In other words, roots of the scientific method in the study of History, of which Europe is so proud, can be traced back to the days of the Chaldean Empire.

In the religious and social spheres too Nibonidus introduced many new ideas, but these created a kind of

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deep-seated unrest in the masses, though the strong hand of the administration did not give the discontent any chance to raise its head. Persian merchants, however, carried to their country news of this hidden weakness and the opportunity thus offered was promptly seized by that power.

The Persian Empire of those days was the empire that was founded by Cyrus, a name of which a better and more accurate spelling would seem to be *Kirus*. Evidently, here we have a name that is almost the same as *Kuru*.

The fact is significant that in ancient Indian records we come across two *Kurus* : a Southern *Kuru* of which the centre was somewhere in the neighbourhood of the modern Kurushetra ; and an *Uttar Kuru* somewhere towards the north, the reference here, presumably, being to the Persian Empire founded by Cyrus. In 539 B.C. this Persian prince led his army to the gates of Babylon, and fortune favoured him in the venture for the people were gravely dissatisfied with the rule of Nibonidus. The result was that he obtained possession without any bloodshed.

Among the reforms of Nibonidus there were some which struck the people as interference with the worship of Ball-Marduk, and this is generally supposed to be the main reason why they sided with the invaders. It appears from the records that the Babylonians who welcomed Cyrus into the city used for their shouts of joy slogans of devotion to Ball-Marduk. In order to gain all the more favour in their eyes, Nibonidus went first of all into the temple of Ball-Marduk and performed worship there ; he then stationed a gaurd of honour at the temple. He also restored the cuts which Nibonidus had imposed upon the incomes and privileges of the *prohits* (priests), and showed even greater munificence to them than their earlier patrons. In view of the very large number of idols of the god, which were crowding the temples everywhere, Nibonidus had removed some of the idols

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and had had them stored in various places. This, it appears, had greatly upset the people and Cyrus increased his popularity still more by showing great dilligence in having each idol restored to the original place where it had reposed before.

By these means Cyrus obtained in Babylon the power and influence of a deliverer, but in 521 B.C.,that is 18 years afterwards, a violent rebellion flared up which was put down with great severity by Darius who was then on the throne of Persia. The cult of Ball-Marduk however, continued to prevail as before until in 330 B.C. the Macedonian Conqueror put an end to it. He destroyed the temple of Ball-Marduk and on the bleeching bones of its priests and its broken idols he raised the foundations of the Greek Empire. Sumeria thus passed into the orbit of Hellenic culture, and after three or four centuries of fusion the characteristics of both yielded a new religion which is familiar to us as Church Christianity. The central idea of the old Babylonian culture became the central idea of Church Christianity as well.

This idea was the belief that the king was God, the essential feature of the conception being the position of Divinity it gave to man of woman born; and the fact is too evident to need comment that the whole edifice of Church Christianity is built on the basis of this fantastic belief. Only here we have the son of the Virgin Mary put in the place which formerly was occupied by the king.

Theocracy,[1] for that is what it amounts to, was evidently in favour, with the Indo-Aryans as well. In *Manu Smriti* there is a chapter on *Raj Dharm* in the course of which the theory is propounded that the Rajah partook of the *Maitras* (portions, qualities) of the eight *Lok Pals* (protectors of the world). The names of these divine protectors as given in *Manu Smriti* are Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Kuber[2] and Yam, etc., and this theory of

1. According to the Bible the first theocratic ruler of Babylon was Nimrod who ruled sometime after the flood (see Gn. 10 : 8-11.)

2. In *Manu Smriti* the names used are synonyms of the names we have given here. (see *Manu Smriti* Adhyay 9 : 1 to 20.)

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the divine nature of the king explains the extraordinary emphasis laid by Vedic religion and culture on unfailing obedience to royal authority. It might interest some of our readers to know that the political agitation that has characterised India for some decades now is absolutely forbidden in the Hindu religious code. Passive resistance and civil disobedience have no sanction in Hinduism which emphatically looks upon actions of this kind as worse than blasphemy and crime. The fundamental political principle inculcated by the Hindu religion is *Balapi navamantavyah.....tishthati*, and the meaning of this famous ashlok is that even if the Rajah was no more than a child, obedience to his wishes was binding upon the subjects. Passages such as this can he multiplied to any extent from Hindu Scriptures which deal with the duty and authority and privileges of the king.

It would be noticed that among the eight protectors of the world mentioned in *Manu Smriti* one is Mitra. In Hellenic culture, at one time, this Mitra was the most important god, its Greek form being *Mithres*. Similarly in the Roman world too this god was fairly well known. The Romans spelt it as Mithras. In Sanskrit it is written Mitra, without an *h*. The word Mithra belongs to Old Persian. *Mithraism*, which is the term used to denote the cult of the worship of this god against which Christianity had to fight so hard, is really the old Persian *Mithra*, with *ism* added to it to give it the meaning of creed or cult. Mithraism was the cult of the worship of all the eight gods spoken off in the passage from *Manu Smriti* quoted above, but Mitra was the chief god among them. The word *Mitra* in Sanskrit means "friend"; but when it is used to denote a god, it is understood to refer to the sun. In the case of the old Persian word Mithra too the meaning is the same, but the sense carried by the Greek and Latin forms is that of god alone.

It is noteworthy in connection with the Hellenic culture that the words *hellen* and *hellios* contain the same component parts, though their spelling is slightly

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different. On the basis of comparative philology I am inclined to venture the opinion that these people came to be called Hellenic on account of their worship of the sun. A study of comparative philology yields many other instances of this kind.

Provided this view is correct, it implies that the culture which resulted from the fusion of the Babylonian and Hellenic influences conjured up the Deity on the basis of a combination of the qualities of kingship and of light that could dispel darkness. Starting from this point, darkness, in time, became in hierograms the symbol that stood for everything evil and injurious; and light similarly became the symbol for good and beneficent things and enjoyable states of well-being. This circumstance has been taken by some to offer valid ground for the belief that a reliable test for judging the moral value of man's actions was the consideration whether the tendency was towards open or secret procedure. This conception was improved and widened out so as to imply that the human mind had two aspects or sides, one bright and the other dark. The bright side of human nature sought the support of an external counterpart more powerful than itself; while for the evil and injurious things too there was understood to be a similarly natured superhuman agency that explained the creation and continued existence of things of this kind.

This in short is the philosophical interpretation of the old ethics which visualised two kinds of superhuman agencies at the back of the Universe. The power of darkness and evil was designated by what we understand the word *shaitan* to mean, and Ishwar or God or Allah was the Benificent Power.

This conception of course was correct only in an infinitesimal part for it was essentially polytheistic in nature. Its most clear and logical and correct presentation is met with in Islam—a conception that is based on direct Revelation from the Deity.

Sometimes it is said that belief in and knowledge of God is unnecessary, that it serves no useful pur-

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pose; that the light and warmth of the sun benefits equally the modern scientist who practically knows everything about that orb of light and the primitive man in the wilds of Africa. The idea, however, that lies at the bottom of this doubt is very superficial, as has been shown by the Holy Quran. It is a fact that a scientist derives far more benefit from the sun through his knowledge of its qualities than the jungle man who knows nothing about it.

But this point, in view of the subject we have under discussion, is only a diagression into which we have been lead by the fact that the cultures entangled in the labyrinths of polytheism, and other such ideas did not flourish very far from Mecca where shone forth the Divine Light that ultimately led groping man out of this Maze—Mithras worshippers and Christ worshippers and even those who thought there was a higher *adhipati* (master) of Mitra and believed, moreover, that there was a seperate *adhipati* for each separate object, for the sun, the moon, the mountains and the forests, etc.

What has been said above in regard to Babylon is based upon the knowledge gained by means of various methods of research into obscure periods of ancient history, but mainly through excavations. A French scholar named Botta conducted excavations in 1843 at Khorasabad on the banks of the Tigris which yielded substantial results, notably traces of a palace built by Sargon II. This Khorasabad, it would appear was a part of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire. All evidence seems to indicate that Nineveh was a large and magnificent metropolis, by no means less than 25 to 30 miles in circumference, with a strong defensive wall all round. This wall was in fact a double thick wall of bricks with earth and sand filled in between the two. Among various interesting objects discovered in the course of these excavations, special mention must be made of winged bulls carved in stone which were mounted on the gates of the palace. These bulls were removed from their place and taken to Paris.

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In the palace of Asur Banipal was found a record in cuneiform writing on bricks which has yielded material for a number of interesting books.

For a long time the task of deciphering these cuneiform writings baffled scholars, but one lucky find brought to light an inscription which contained the same text in three scripts—in this cuneiform writing, in the Medean script and in Old Persian. From this inscription, after a good deal of research, a key was prepared which proved satisfactory in deciphering cunieform writings. It may not be without interest to note here that a key to the ancient Egyptian script, called hieroglyphics, was found though a similarly fortunate discovery.

Cuneiform inscriptions brought to light so far yield very nearly a full picture of the life lived by the Assyrians. They were, first and foremost, hunters and warriors. They were strong and hardy and very fine horsemen. They were fearless and rather awesome in appearance and, it is said, cruel by disposition. Revenge for a wrong done to them was the most prime necessity in their code of honour, and should the father fail to exact it, the duty passed on to the son, and so on, until the offender or his descendant was at last struck down. Fighting, it seems, was the spice of their lives, for they often undertook wars against their neighbours for no better reason than a desire for fun and excitement. Quite possibly, this may be the reason why the word *Asur* has such a bad meaning in Sanskrit. Later on *Asur* and *rakshash* became synonymous and in time began to be pictured in exaggerated terms—hedious forms with long nails and aweful teeth, etc.

The Asurs or Assyrians believed their ruler to be divine, and later on they began to look upon him as the incarnation of God. The Assyrian style of expression in language, the things they usually talked about and the directions in which their thoughts flowed are such that they at once recall to one's mind those *suktas* of the Vedas wherein Indra says, in the first person, any-

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thing with regard to himself. This circumstance strikes one with all the more force in the case of inscriptions which commemorate in their own words the achievements of three particular Assyrian Emprors, *i.e.*, Nazir Hapal (882 B. C.), Tigletehpeelesar (745 B.C.) and Senacherib. The only difference between these and Vedic suktas lies in the names of these emperors; if the name of Indra were to be put in instead they might easily be taken to be Vedic mantras. The style and expressions used by these emperors are almost identical with those used by Indra in those mantras wherein he rejoices in his triumph over *Vritra*. The terms used to denote the destruction of Susa at the hands of Asur Banipal are typical of the *Puràm bhindu* (the destroyer of cities) mantras of the Rig Veda. *Shushm* seems to be the Sanskrit form of Susa and *Shushmnah* means " inhabitants of Shush."[1]

The above represents the barest outline of Babylonian, Assyrian and Chaldean history of which it is the intention of this article to trace the effect on Vedic religion and culture. Having presented this outline to the reader we shall, in the next instalment trace this effect.[2]

PANDIT RUDRA DEVA SHASTRI.

1. *Shushm* according to *Nirukt* of Yask Achary means energy, force, strength. This meaning, however, in no way excludes the possibility of Shushm also standing for Susa.

2. In passing it may be mentioned here that according to the Quranic view (see Surah A'raf verses 138 and 139) what caused the destruction of nations such as these was their adiction to idol-worship, and history too bears it out that idolatry was the chief trait of their religion and culture.

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THE KA'BAH

The Ka'bah does not contain the tomb of the Master-Prophet Muhammad, nor is it an object to be worshipped by the Muslims, as is wrongly imagined by many Europeans. It is a Prayer-Hall, first built, according to Arab Tradition, by the Prophet Adam, the father of the human race. The first abode of Adam was Mecca, therefore it is called *Ummul Qura*, the mother of the cities and the language spoken there (*viz.*, Arabic) is called *Ummul-Alsina*, the mother of the languages. The temple is called *Beit-Allah al Haram*, the Holy House of Allah, and its origin can be traced to the most distant days of antiquity. For more than thirteen centuries, from the Atlantic's African shore as far as the Chinese coast-line of the Pacific, more than 30 crores of the Faithful turn five times daily in the direction of the Holy Ka'bah at Mecca, their prayers to be offered up to the Most High, the One True God—Allah, the Greatest of all. All the Muslims facing in one direction in their Prayers—to the place built first of all to adore and worship Allah—symbolise the Union of the Muslim World. This act also gives the Muslims an opportunity of worshipping their Creator from each and every angle of the compass.

Mecca was situated in one of the most arid and forsaken spots on earth, so that it was neither rich nor powerful; but ever since it became the centre of the Muslim world many opulent towns are zealous of its glory, for, in addition to being the birth-place of Muhammad, the Master-Prophet, it shelters the Ka'bah in its midst. In the eyes of the True Believers, Mecca's treasures are radiant with an incomparable brilliance that is not earthly.

As mentioned above the Ka'bah was first built by Adam. It was rebuilt on the same foundations by the

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Prophet Abraham, with the help of his son, Ismael, the ancestor of the Arabs. Since then often repaired, but retaining the same lines and proportions, the Ka'bah became the goal of Arab pilgrims, flocking to adore Allah, the Only One, and perform the seven ritual circuits instituted under the title of *Tawaf*.

Gradually the worship of Allah, the Only One, degenerated in the memory of the pilgrims who added the practice of Idolatry. The Master-Prophet Muhammad was at last sent by Allah to destroy the 360 images made and worshipped by the ignorant people, and to restore Ka'bah as the central place of worship of the One Who has no equal.

DR. M. M. SADIQ.

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